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PRAYER

ITS UTILITY

BY

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THE

DOCTRINE OF PRAYER;

ITS UTILITY,

AND ITS

RELATION TO PROVIDENCE.

BY

P. H. MELL, D.D., LL.D.,

PROFESSOR OF ETHICS AND METAPHYSICS IN THE UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA.

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A MANUAL OF PARLIAMENTARY PRACTICE,

BEING

RULES FOR CONDUCTING BUSINESS IN DELIBERATIVE ASSEMBLIES.

By P. H. MELL, D.D., LL.D.,

Professor of Ethics and Metaphysics, and Lecturer on Parliamentary Law in the Univertity of Georgia.

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PREFACE.

Some things in the bible are matters of pure revelation; and are to be accepted simply because they are revealed. Such doctrines, for example, as the Trinity and the Incarnation, are addressed not to reason but to faith. They are to be accepted and sustained, not on the principles of human philosophy, but on the authority merely of God's word. In relation to such as they, all that reason can do is to demonstrate for us the divine origin of the scriptures, and to interpret their revelations about them according to the laws of language. When the doctrine is apprehended by the understanding, however great its mystery, reason itself would say, it must be implicitly received.

Other things, again, are clearly taught in the bible, and capable of being sustained by reason, that no finite mind can harmonize. God's sovereignty over sin and man's free agency in the commission of it, for instance, are each clearly taught in the scriptures, and commend themselves to sound reason; but what human mind can reconcile the one with the other? Nevertheless, reason itself can see that if we cannot harmonize them, it is not because they are irreconcilable, but because the subject is above human capacity.

The doctrine of Prayer, though difficult of solution, is to be placed however in neither of the above categories. We are not compelled to accept God's precepts concerning it by mere faith; nor are we under the necessity of excusing our failure to harmonize it with other revealed truths on the ground of our want of capacity. The bible makes no formal essay to give the philosophy of prayer, nor to reconcile it with other doctrines; but it

furnishes the means, direct and inferential, to enable any careful and competent inquirer to do so. True, the difficulties connected with the subject have perplexed many thinking minds; and its apparent conflict with the doctrine of Providence has offered encouragement to skeptics to attack the christian religion, of which it is a part. But all this happens because the doctrine is not thoroughly understood.

Prayer is not a weak part of the gospel system. It can not only, by inherent force, hold its own position against all assaults, but it can furnish efficient support to other parts of the system of divine truth. The writer hopes that the following essay, which he modestly offers to the public, will tend to sustain this proposition.

ATHENS, Ga., December 2d, 1875.

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THE DOCTRINE OF PRAYER.

CHAPTER I.

THE DOCTRINE OF PRAYER.

PRAYER is natural to man. If there were no written revelation on the subject, its necessity and duty could find justification in man's constitution and condition, and in the relations he sustains to the God of nature and providence. The religious element within him, however much he may through depravity resist it, prompts him to recognize the existence of a Supreme Being, to inquire after, and to worship him. This is shown by the fact that there is no tribe, however ignorant and degraded, that is destitute of a

system of religion. Everywhere, a Supreme Being is acknowledged, to whom appeals are made to turn away wrath, and to propitiate favor.

Man's experience of want and suffering, his consciousness of sin, and his sense of helplessness and of dependence for things spiritual as well as temporal, prompt him to seek for help, and to ask for it from the only Being competent to give it. This would he do, when pressed by such necessity, even though he did not know that God was placable and gracious; for who knows but that a show of submission and confidence may excite interest, and win kindness and favor. But convinced of God's benevolence,—knowing that He is good and doeth good—he is encouraged to come boldly to His throne, as to one of grace, to obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.

Prayer has been analyzed into Adoration; Thanksgiving; Confession; and Petition—and

perhaps exhaustively; for Adoration includes Invocation, and Petition, Intercession. Now, every one of these finds in man's nature and relations occasions for its exercise.

The contemplation of high degrees of excellence in character, and the knowledge of deeds illustrious for wisdom, power and goodness, excite naturally in men's minds feelings of admiration. Let God's glorious attributes then be known—let men become acquainted with His wonderful works in creation, providence and redemption, and sufficiently appreciate them, and their hearts will yearn to address to Him the language of Adoration and praise.

Gratitude for benefits conferred, is a feeling nature has implanted in the human breast. So, when God has made unmistakable interpositions in men's behalf, to rescue them from evil, and to impart to them good, and they have become fully sensible of the favor bestowed, there will be naturally an

irrepressible desire to utter to Him the language of Thanksgiving and praise.

Let one recognize his relations to the Creator and Ruler—who demands from him unreserved consecration—and let him know and, in proper degree, feel his short-comings and his sin, and nothing could prevent him from addressing to God the language of Confession and penitence.

Show him the danger he is exposed to, the wants which press him, and the blessings that he needs, and let him feel that God alone can protect and bless him, and nothing is more natural than the language of Petition. How often is this verified by the fact that wicked men, and even professed infidels and atheists, call upon God for help when suddenly pressed by danger or distress!

Nor is this all. Provision is made in man's nature for the exercise also of that form of petition which consists in Intercession for others. A social being, loving and being

loved—feeling an interest therefore in others' welfare, how natural it is for him who has obtained audience in his own behalf to intercede for needed blessing upon those he loves.

Natural Religion teaches unequivocally the duty of prayer; and nothing is needed for its due exercise but a spirit of piety.

But Revelation sets up this doctrine with a clearness of statement, a fulness of detail, and an affluence of illustration, that leave nothing more to be desired by the candid inquirer. It not only authorizes and commands prayer, but, by formal precept and varied examples of acceptable prayer, teaches how the duty is to be performed. It asserts not only that men *may*[1] pray but that they *must*[2] do so, in order to please God—indeed, it is by this exercise that the two great classes—God's friends and his enemies—are sometimes distinguished. Of the former individually it is

[1] Ph. 4: 6.

[2] Mat. 7: 7. Is. 55: 6. Lu. 18: 1 and 21: 36. 1 Thes. 5: 17.

said, "Behold he prayeth"[1]—of the latter, "Who call not upon the Lord;"[2] and they are represented as saying, "What is the Almighty that we should serve him? and what profit should we have, if we pray unto him?"[3] Salvation, as well under the[4] Old Testament as under the New,[5] is expressed in epitome, "Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved."

God not only invites and encourages men to pray in such language as this, "Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God," but he pledges himself to coöperate with them. He promises that he will give them the Holy Spirit to teach them to pray;[6] and declares that he is nigh to all that call upon him,[7] and

[1] Ac. 9: 11.
[2] Ps. 14: 4 & 53: 4.
[3] Job 21: 15.
[4] Jocl. 2: 32.
[5] Rom. 10: 13.
[6] Zech. 12: 10. Rom. 8: 15, 26, Gal. 4: 6. Lu. 11: 13.
[7] Ps. 145: 18.

a rewarder of all them that diligently seek him.[1] Do earthly parents know how to give good gifts to their children? God declares that much more shall he the Father in heaven, give good things to them that ask him.[2]

The bible prescribes private,[3] social,[4] family,[5] and public[6] prayer; and gives examples to illustrate them all severally.[7] Descending to particulars, it gives minute directions to guide in the discharge of the duty. It teaches that prayer is generally to be addressed to the Father,[8] the representative of the Godhead, but authorizes appeals also to the son,[9] and to the Holy Spirit.[10] In general, worshipers approach the Father in the

[1] Heb. 11 : 6.
[2] Mat. 7 : 11.
[3] Mat. 6 : 6. Gen. 32 : 26.
[4] Mat, 18 : 19, 20.
[5] Jer. 10 : 25.
[6] Is. 56 : 7. 1 Cor. 14 : 14–16, Ac. 4 : 24, and 12 : 5, 12.
[7] Ac. 10 : 9, 30. Gen. 12 : 5, 8 & 35 : 2, 37. Jos. 24 : 15. Job 1 : 5. Ac. 16 : 25 and 2 : 46, 47.
[8] Jno. 16 : 23.
[9] Lu. 23 : 42. Ac. 7 : 59.
[10] 2 Thes. 3 : 5. Rev. 1 : 4. 2 Cor. 13 : 14.

name of the Son and through the invoked assistance of the Holy Spirit.[1]

The scriptures forbid the worshiping of angels,[2] and are profoundly silent on the subject of addressing petitions to saints or to the virgin Mary.

The bible explains what must be our mental condition and what our mental processes to make prayer acceptable. If we regard iniquity in our hearts, the Lord will not hear us.[3] When we approach the throne of grace we must do so with humility,[4] and yet, in the strength of Christ, with boldness;[5] forgiving if we have aught against any;[6] in faith, believing that God is, and that he is a rewarder of all who diligently seek him;[7] and with an importunity[8] which would say, "I will not let thee go, except thou bless[9] me."

[1] Ep. 2: 18.
[2] Col. 2: 18.
[3] Ps. 66: 18.
[4] 2 Chr. 7: 14 & 33: 12.
[5] Heb. 4: 16.
[6] Mar. 11: 25.
[7] Ja. 1: 6, 7.
[8] Lu. 11: 8, 9.
[9] Gen. 32: 26.

To pray to God acceptably we must approach Him with the whole heart,[1] lifting up holy hands without wrath and doubting.[2]

Our prayer is to take not only ourselves but God[3] also and our fellow creatures in the world[4] as its objects. We are to pray for the glory of God's name, and the progress of his cause. Supplication, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, are to be made for all men—for strangers therefore as well as acquaintances, for enemies[5] as well as friends;[6] for "all men," whatever may be their classes,[7] their relations,[8] or their[9] conditions. True, Jeremiah, in one instance was forbidden to pray for the people of the Jews;[10] and the apostle John did not feel at liberty to say

[1] Ps. 119 : 58, 145.
[2] 1 Tim. 2 : 8.
[3] Lu. 11 : 2.
[4] 1 Tim. 2 : 1.
[5] Mat. 5 : 44.
[6] Job 42 : 8. Ja. 5 : 16.
[7] 1 Tim. 2 : 2. 2 Thes. 3 : 1. Ps. 22 : 6. Is. 62 : 6, 7. Ep. 6 : 18 & 1 : 16.
[8] Lu. 7 : 2, 3. Gen. 17 : 18. Job 42 : 8. Mat. 15 : 22. Rom. 10 : 1.
[9] Ja. 5 : 14. Philem. 22.
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[7] Ac. 10 : 9, 30. Gen. 12 : 5, 8 & 35 : 2, 37. Jos. 24 : 15. Job 1 : 5. Ac. 16 : 25 and 2 : 46, 47.
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[9] Ja. 5 : 14. Philem. 22. [10] Jer. 7 : 16.

that those to whom he wrote should pray for one who had sinned a sin unto death.[1]

The bible even informs us as to the posture in which acceptable prayer has been offered. We read that some in ancient times kneeled down and prayed, as did the [2]Saviour, and Paul;[3] that others stood up and spread forth the hands towards heaven, as Solomon did;[4] and that others still fell down before the Lord,[5] or fell on their faces as did [6]Joshua, and David, and the elders of Israel.[7]

In Old Testament times, prayer was an important part of the worship of God. The Temple was called "a house of prayer for all people;"[8] and there were certain seasons every day when prayer was offered up in [9]it. Besides, there were other places also, "where prayer was wont to be made."[10] The New

[1] 1 Jno. 5 : 16.
[2] Lu. 22 : 41.
[3] Ac. 20 : 36.
[4] 1 Ki. 8 : 22.
[5] Deut. 9 : 18.
[6] Jos. 5 : 14.
[7] I Chr. 21 : 16.
[8] Is. 56 : 7.
[9] Ps. 55 : 17. Ac. 3 : 1.
[10] Ac. 16 : 13.

Testament every where teaches that prayer is an indispensable part of the worship the Saviour enjoins.

But specifically, and somewhat more in detail: What are the subjects on which men may address petitions to God? Can they commune with Him on any topic on which they feel absorbing interest? Are there any limits prescribed to desire and utterance on those topics that are proper subjects of prayer? Are we limited to persons in this world, or can our prayers range through the unseen world seeking to affect the condition of the departed dead?

These questions can best be answered, *First*, By noticing the examples given in the scriptures of prayers that were answered; *Second*, By seeing what inferences on the subject may be legitimately drawn from the general tenor of the scriptures applicable to the question; and, *Third*, By inquiring what are the precepts on the subject applicable to all devout men and to all times.

First. Examples given in the scriptures of prayers that were acceptable and answered:

1st. *In the domain of grace.* In petitions for those blessings needful to restore to the image and favor of God, men in ancient times seem to have felt no fear that they might wander into the region of the unauthorized and extravagant. Without hesitation or reserve, they asked for themselves and others pardon of sin;[1] peace with God and joy and hope;[2] the gift and graces of the Holy Spirit;[3] the divine presence;[4] assistance in duties;[5] and temptations;[6] comfort in afflictions;[7] and grace to improve them to sanctification;[8] hope in death;[9] and a happy immortality beyond the grave.[10] The sublime and daring prayer of Moses, "show me thy

[1] Ps. 32 : 5.
[2] Rom. 15 : 13.
[3] Ep. 3 : 16
[4] Ep. 1 : 17.
[5] Ps. 143 : 10.
[6] Mat. 6 : 13
[7] Ps. 102 : 2.
[8] Ps. 85 : 4-6.
[9] Ps. 39 : 4, 13.
[10] Lu. 23 : 42.

glory,"[1] was not less authorized than the humble petition of the publican, "God be merciful to me a sinner!"[2] There was no danger that scripture worthies would offend by asking for themselves and others for spiritual blessings too great in number, and too extravagant in degree, if Paul's prayer for the Ephesians was justifiable: "For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, that he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man; that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God."[3]

[1] Ex. 33 : 18. [2] Lu. 18 : 13. [3] Eph. 3 : 14–19.

If men may pray to be filled with all the fulness of God, then there is no danger that our petitions may be extravagant while we ask for blessings in the domains of grace. But there is no instance in the bible where blessings of grace were asked for in behalf of one who had passed beyond the confines of earth; nor is there any precept authorizing such petition.

2. *Examples of prayers answered, in the domains of nature and providence.*

(*a*) *For understanding and wisdom.* Solomon asked and obtained an understanding to discern judgment;[1] and all who lack wisdom, in any sphere or on any subject, are invited to ask of God who giveth to all men liberally.[2] Illustrated and authorized also by the Saviour's promise to his disciples in anticipation of persecution: "For I will give you a mouth and wisdom, which all your adversaries shall not be able to gainsay nor resist."[3]

[1] 1 Ki. 3: 11. [2] Ja. 1: 5.

[3] Lu. 21: 15. See also Ex. 4: 12. Ac. 6: 10, and 1 Cor. 2: 4, 13.

(*b*) *For restoration to health.* Abraham prayed, and God healed Abimelech, and his wife, and his maid servants;[1] and Hezekiah, in answer to prayer, was healed, though "sick unto death."[2] Paul prayed for the father of Publius, and he was healed "of a fever and of a bloody flux;"[3] and the Saviour, in answer to the petition of the centurion, healed his servant, who "was sick and ready to die."[4] Indeed, the Apostle James elevates this into a universal privilege: "Is any sick among you? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him and the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up."[5] Asa is reproached because in his last sickness he had recourse to physicians rather than to the Lord.[6]

(*c*) *For offspring; and for the welfare of children.* Hannah[7] and Zacharias[8] prayed for

[1] Gen. 20: 17
[2] 2 Ki. 20: 5.
[3] Ac. 28: 8.
[4] Lu. 7: 2.
[5] Ja. 5: 14. 15.
[6] 2 Chr. 16: 12.
[7] 1 Sam. 1: 27.
[8] Lu. 1: 13.

offspring, and their petitions were granted. Abraham prayed for blessings on his son, Ishmael,[1] and God heard him. The Saviour granted the petition of the Syro-phenician woman [2] in behalf of her daughter; and of the "certain man who came kneeling down to him, and saying: Lord, have mercy on my son."[3]

(*d*) *For deliverance from prison; and from distress and affliction.* In answer to prayer, Peter[4] was delivered from prison; and prayer furnished the occasion for the relief of Paul and Silas[5] from the dungeon and the stocks. David, in the day of trouble,[6] sought the Lord, and God "gave ear unto him;" "out of the low dungeon," Jeremiah called upon the name of the Lord, and he "heard his voice;"[7] and Jonah testifies, "Out of the belly of hell cried I, and thou heardest my voice."[8]

[1] Gen. 17: 20 [2] Mat. 15: 22. [3] Mat. 17: 14.
[4] Ac. 12: 5. [5] Ac. 16: 25. [6] Ps. 18: 6. and 77: 2.
[7] Lam. 3: 55, 56. [8] Jo. 2: 2.

(*e*) *For the good things of this world that are necessary for physical support and comfort.* The Saviour taught his disciples to pray: "Give us this day our daily bread." There is no instance where prayer was answered that was offered for gratification of ambition, of avarice, and of appetite in excess. The Saviour rejected the petition of the mother of Zebedee's children when she prayed that her sons might sit, one on his right hand and the other on his left hand in his kingdom.[1] The prayer of Agur[2] seems to agree with the precepts[3] on the subject: "Give me neither poverty nor riches; feed me with food convenient for me." To this may be added the prayer of Jabez for *prosperity* and *protection:* "Oh that thou wouldest bless me indeed, and enlarge my coast, and that thine hand might be with me, and that thou wouldest keep me from evil, that it

[1] Mat. 20: 20. [2] Prov. 30: 8.
[3] Prov. 23: 4. Mat. 19: 23. 1 Tim. 6: 9.

might not grieve me! and God granted him that which he requested."[1]

(*f*) *Against the sword, judgment, pestilence and famine.* Men prayed against public enemies;[2] that God would prevent their assaults;[3] that he would give victory over them;[4] and that he would relieve his people from the oppression of those by whom they had been subjugated.[5] And Solomon gives us to understand that prayer by the people of Israel would be efficacious: "If there be any famine in the land, if there be pestilence, blasting, mildew, locust, or if there be caterpillar, if their enemies besiege them in the land of their cities; whatsoever plague, whatsoever sickness there be."[6]

(*g*) *For the control of the seasons.* The quotation under the last head illustrates this also. Solomon prayed that God would hear

[1] 1 Chr. 4: 10. [2] Josh. 7: 6.
[3] Neb. 4: 9–15. [4] 1 Sam. 7: 9, 10. 2 Chr. 14: 11, and 20: 6, and 32: 20.
[5] Ex. 2: 23-25. 2 Ki. 13: 3-5. [6] 1 Ki. 8: 37.

the petition of the people for rain when "heaven is shut up;"[1] and James tells us, "Elijah was a man subject to like passions as we are, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain; and it rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six months. And he prayed again and the heavens gave rain, and the earth brought forth her fruit."[2]

3. *Examples of prayer answered in the domains of the miraculous and the supernatural.* By prayer of Moses the plague of frogs was removed from the Egyptians;[3] and through his intercession, the fire was quenched which the Lord caused to burn among the Israelites and consume them because of their complaining.[4] When time was likely to fail for the complete destruction of the Amorites, Joshua was authorized to command effectively, "Sun stand thou still upon Gibeon,

[1] 1 Ki. 8: 35.
[2] Ja. 5: 17, 18.
[3] 1 Ex. 8: 13.
[4] Num. 11: 1, 2.

and thou, moon, in the valley of [1] Ajalon." After slaying a thousand Philistines with the jaw bone of an ass, Samson was sore athirst, and in danger of famishing, prayed; and "God clave an hollow place that was in the jaw, and there came water thereout," and he drank and revived.[2] In answer to the prayer of "the man of God," Jeroboam's hand which had been miraculously "dried up" in the act of offering violence, was "restored [3] again." Elijah prayed, and "fire from the Lord fell and consumed the burnt sacrifice, and the wood and the stones, and the dust, and licked up the water that was in the trench." [4]

God consented by miraculous tests to decide lots in answer to prayer. By accepting the test of Abraham's servant,[5] he miraculously indicated to him whom he had appointed to be the wife of Isaac. Accepting Gideon's test, he showed him that He would

[1] Jos. 10: 12.
[2] Jud. 15: 19.
[3] 1 Ki. 13: 6.
[4] 1 Ki. 18: 38.
[5] Gen. 24: 14.

save Israel by his hand, now, by moistening a fleece of wool with dew while all the earth beside was dry; and then, by making the fleece dry while upon all the ground there was dew.[1] On the prayer of Isaiah, the shadow was brought back ten degrees on the dial of Ahaz,[2] as a sign to Hezekiah that the Lord would heal him. In answer to the prayer of the disciples, God caused the lot to fall upon Matthias as an apostle in the place of [3] Judas.

God sometimes answered prayer through the mouths of supernatural visitants. "The man Gabriel" gave Daniel the information sought at a throne of grace;[4] and a "man stood before Cornelius in bright [5] clothing," while he "prayed in his house," and said, "Thy prayer is heard."

Blind Bartimeus prayed and sight was bestowed upon him.[6] In some instances, the dead was brought to life again in answer to

[1] Jud. 6: 36–40.
[2] 2 Ki. 20: 11.
[3] Ac. 1: 23–26.
[4] Dan. 9: 21.
[5] Ac. 10: 30.
[6] Mar. 10: 46.

prayer.[1] But we need not multiply instances under this head.

Under divine impulse, then, and with faith strong enough, men in ancient times did not hesitate to ask for those things they desired, even though the answer required the display of miraculous and supernatural power.

Prevailing prayer has been offered up for the restoration of the dead to life; but the scriptures present no case where prayers, prevailing or otherwise, were offered to affect, temporarily or permanently, in the other world, the state of the dead.

In answer further to the question, what is the scope and what the rule of prayer, notice,

Second. What inferences may be legitimately drawn from the general tenor of the scriptures applicable to the subject.

No argument is needed to sustain the inferences that it is legitimate to pray that God would give all the aid necessary to enable us

[1] 2 Ki. 4 : 33. Ac. 9 : 40, and 20 : 10.

to obey His commandments; that He would bestow upon us all the things contained in His promises, and give us grace to escape all the things contained in His threatenings; that he would bestow upon us all those blessings designed for men that are discussed in the doctrines of the gospel, and all such as scripture history informs us were conferred actually upon His people. Finally, the inference is legitimate that we may ask for all those things which were obtained in answer to prayer by those whose circumstances were similar to ours.

But the question can be answered comprehensively, briefly and completely by,

Third. Inquiring what are the precepts on the subject applicable to all devout persons and to all times.

What kind of persons will God hear? "The Lord is nigh unto all them that call upon him, to all that call upon him [1] *in truth.*"

[1] Ps. 145 : 18.

What range of topics can devout men legitimately introduce into prayer?

(*a*) *Whatsoever desires they have* which they can express before God, *with a belief that He will gratify them.* "Therefore I say unto you, what things soever ye desire when ye pray, believe that ye receive them and ye shall have them." [1] "And all things whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer believing ye shall receive."[2]

(*b*) *They can ask what they will.* "If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you." [3]

(*c*) What they ask *according to the will of God.* "And this is the confidence that we have in him, that if we ask anything according to his will, he heareth us." [4]

In one of the above quotations, men are invited to present petitions *according to their*

[1] Mar. 11 : 24. [2] Mat. 21 : 22. See also 1 Jno. 5 : 15, and Jno. 14 : 13, 14, and 15 : 16.
[3] Jno. 15 : 7. [4] 1 Jno. 5 : 14.

own wills: in another, they are instructed to ask *according to the will of God.* The conflict in the precepts is apparent, not real, as will be shown hereafter.

Scripture precepts, then, enable us to give the scope and the rule of prayer in one short sentence: Men are at liberty to pray in the name of Christ, for anything they desire, according to the will of God, in the realm of nature, providence, or grace; and they will obtain the answer, provided that they present the petition in faith, fully believing that it is God's will to bestow it, and that they will certainly receive it.

CHAPTER II.

THE UTILITY OF PRAYER.

GOD'S authority unmistakably enjoins prayer as a duty; and every renewed heart with gratitude and joy exercises it as a privilege. Scripture and experience thus join in sustaining the proposition that prayer is of divine appointment. Yet, notwithstanding, the subject never fails to spring in every thinking mind questions more or less embarrassing —questions not impertinent or captious, but such as rise spontaneously, and need to be answered in order to harmonize this injunction with other portions of divine revelation. Why should God require men to pray? If He knows what we need before we ask Him—nay, if He must tell us what our wants are before we can discover them ourselves, is it not

a useless formality for us to present back to Him in the form of petition what He has already impressed upon us in the form of want and desire? What is the utility and what the philosophy of prayer? As already intimated, these are pertinent questions; and the answers to them will tend further to elucidate prayer, and prove that it must be a divine requisition.

The answer may be given in general terms thus: Men are required to pray because God would use them as instrumentalities in His hands for the accomplishment of His wise and gracious purposes in reference to them.

But specifically: 1st, By prayer, God would check the tendency in the human mind to forget Him. The infinite Creator, Preserver, and Redeemer, has a right to supreme position in the human intellect, bringing all other thoughts into captivity to Him—to a permanent residence in the human heart, compelling all other objects of affection to make obeisance

and pay tribute. It is for man's highest interest also that this should be so; and he attains to his greatest felicity here, when he can say, "Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee." But unhappily, by the fall, the race lost the principle of supreme love to God; and every unrenewed human mind is averse to thoughts of Him. What though the heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament showeth His handy work—though day unto day uttereth speech and night unto night showeth knowledge, men's eyes see not God in creation, their ears hear not His voice in nature. Their hearts say to Him, "Depart from us, we desire not a knowledge of thy ways." The inspired description of unrenewed persons is, "God is not in all their thoughts;" and even the renewed, until fully sanctified, detect in themselves frequently "an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God." Now, to assert His own

rights, and for the attainment of His people's good, our Father in heaven would correct this tendency. For this object, in part, were ordained the administration of grace, and the mission of the Son and of the Spirit. The loss of supreme love to God constituted depravity; and the restoration of this principle to the human heart in all its perfection and power will constitute the completeness of the work of grace undertaken by the Persons of the adorable Trinity. For this purpose, heaven brings into operation not only divine principles, but human agency: not only imparts spiritual influences, but requires and enforces human habits. One of these is the habit of approaching formally into his presence at short intervals, and communing with him, as it were, face to face. To obey the command, "Pray without ceasing," [1] implies the maintenance of a frame of mind which will qualify, in all circumstances and at all times, for a

[1] 1 Thes. 5: 17.

prompt approach to the throne of grace—nay, which will make one always consciously in the presence of God, acknowledging Him in all things, with every thought and feeling, as it were, in a devotional attitude. By prayer, then, men are able to retain God in their thoughts; for it is a duty which cannot be performed without frequent, if not constant, thoughts of Him.

2d. Men are required to pray, because God would have them to prize His blessings when He bestows them. It is a trait of human nature that men esteem that lightly which costs them little. However valuable intrinsically anything may be, if it comes to us freely and gratuitously, it makes no impression upon us. How lightly do men esteem God's great natural blessings! The pure breath of heaven, that inflates our lungs, that imparts vitalizing qualities to our blood—indeed, that is synonymous with life itself; the water that gushes from ten thousand fountains around us, to

slake our thirst, and in numberless other ways, minister to our comfort and health; the sun that with glorious light illuminates our pathway, fertilizes our fields, and robes our landscapes with splendor—By whom are these inestimable blessings suitably appreciated? Who thanks God every time he inhales the life giving air; acknowledges his obligations every time he quaffs the cooling beverage: and gives glory to God every time that he is consciously bathed in the sun's effulgence? Suppose proclamation were made from heaven that when the sun declines to-day behind the western horizon, it would withdraw its rays from the heavenly bodies also, and leave this world in perpetual darkness, unless men put up importunate prayer that God would send it back again to dispense its daily beneficence. Suppose that men believed that proclamation as genuine and authentic, and realized the utter stagnation and death which would result, how many would carelessly seek their

couches at the accustomed time for retirement? Who would refuse or neglect to pray, as well as he could? And when the usual time should arrive for appearances indicating the approach of the morning sun, how many anxious eyes would be directed to the eastern heavens; and when the first faint streaks of dawn should appear, giving guaranty of the approach of the king of day, and furnishing evidence that their prayers had been answered, how many hearts would swell with gratitude to God, and how many tongues would be eloquent in His praise! Yet, the unconditional blessings are just as great as they would be in the case supposed. God deals with men according to his knowledge of their character. That His blessings of providence and of grace may not be as lightly esteemed as the great natural gifts, He requires that men should feel interested in their acquisition; and be in a frame of mind prepared to appreciate them when acquired;

and therefore He commands them to pray to him.

3d. By prayer, men are made to take themselves under their own watch-care, and to be systematic christians. We cannot adore God for what He is, unless we study His character in nature, providence and revelation; nor can we thank Him for what He does, unless we make ourselves acquainted with the very items of His goodness. We cannot properly confess sins to Him, unless we know not only our sinful disposition but the overt acts we have committed; and we cannot present petitions unless we ascertain and feel our wants. Now, all these things imply system, watchfulness, and care. They imply that our minds are so attentive that none of God's dealings escape us that our sins are not committed without our consciousness and recognition; and that no real want escapes us through inadvertence. Does God require that we should at short intervals re-

count to Him the items of His goodness, and give a full and minute account of ourselves? Then, He virtually requires that we should keep a record of all these items; which is but to require that we should be thoughtful, watchful, and systematic. No one can faithfully discharge the duty of prayer without becoming a systematic christian.

4th. God requires us to pray in order that we may stand pledged to labor for the things for which we pray. The divine life in the human soul, and its progress in the human experience, are the products of divine grace. By grace are men saved, through faith, and that not of themselves, it is the gift of God; and Christ is the author and finisher of faith. But, in salvation, God deals with men not as automata, but as sensitive and volitional beings. Though he works in them, it is that he might make them will and do of his good pleasure. True, in justification, "God imputeth righteousness without works;" and

in this connection, men are commanded to "work not," but to "believe on him that justifieth the ungodly;"[1] but *being* justified by faith, they are exhorted to work out their own salvation with fear and trembling; and are encouraged to do so by the assurance that it is God who worketh in them to will and to do of His good pleasure.[2] If converted men have faults, if they are liable to besetting sins, the method of God's grace is to remove them, not by reaching down an almighty hand and taking them instantly away, as if they were material substances, but to impart such influences as to make His people discover the faults and the sins; and abhor them; and successfully struggle against them. Do men need any bestowal or any growth of spiritual graces—as e. g. of faith, and hope and love? The method of God is not to reach down His hand, and put these graces, as foreign substances, into the soul, but rather to impart to

[1] Rom. 4: 6. [2] Phil. 2: 12, 13.

the individual a divine principle, and subject him to the operation of a divine influence, so as to enkindle in his breast the desire for these graces, and stimulate him to the effort to secure them, by the use of such self-culture as the Holy Spirit will enable him successfully to employ. Now, to this end, God makes the requirement of prayer. Is any one convinced that he has faults of character; does he feel that he is in danger of being overcome by constitutional and easily besetting sins, and, with this conviction and this feeling, does he come to the throne of grace, and beg God to take away those faults and to free him from those sins? Then, in the very act of prayer, he in effect pledges himself that he will do all in his power to overcome those faults, and to guard against those sins. His prayer is a declaration of war against them, and an arming of himself with the panoply of heaven, which, under the divine blessing, will ultimately bring him off victorious over them.

No one can prayerfully confess a fault or a sin to God, and go away and thoughtlessly or recklessly indulge the one or commit the other.

Does any one earnestly desire the acquisition of a christian grace, or its increase in growth and power? God kindles that desire. Does he pray for this blessing? Then, he pledges himself that, God helping him, he will deny himself of all things that would tend to hinder the existence of the grace or its growth; that he will direct his attention to all such things as would tend to produce it, or to stimulate its growth. For example, Does he pray for faith? Then, he pledges himself that he will resist the evil heart of unbelief that is in him, and by a careful study of God's word, will try to convince himself of His free mercy and grace in Christ Jesus; of the fulness of the atonement to save the chief of sinners who relies upon it; and of the faithfulness of God, who invites men to trust in His Son, and who promises salvation to all

who thus believe. It would be mockery to pray for faith, or for its increase, without using the means that God appoints and blesses; for faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. When men therefore ask God to increase their faith, they virtually pledge themselves to do all in their power, with the blessing of God, to cultivate this grace in themselves. So we may illustrate in the case of hope, or love, or any other christian grace.

The same reason may be given for the scriptural command to pray for others. God requires us to present to Him intercessions for others, not because He needs information from us of their wants, or because He waits for an impulse to act in their behalf, but

(*a*) Because He would cultivate our christian graces. The waters of benevolence are refluent; and he is watered most in his own soul who is most active in watering the souls of others.[1]

[1] Prov, 11: 25.

(*b*) God requires us to pray for others that we might thus be stimulated to work for them. No one can, in good faith and with strong desire, pray for a good thing in behalf of another, without standing pledged to do all in his power to help him to that good thing. No one can truly pray for the salvation of another without feeling impelled and pledged to do all in his power to bring him to Christ. His personal efforts, in all judicious ways, will inevitably accompany his prayers, and grow out of them. No one can pray for the salvation of the heathen without virtually pledging his property, and, if necessary, himself also to carry to them the glad tidings of salvation. Desire prompts the prayer, and the prayer increases the desire, and both exert an influence upon the petitioner—the one, by direct power impelling, the other, by reflex influence, pledging him to active efforts to the evangelizing of the heathen.

Thus it is seen that prayer is not a sense-

less requirement, without reason or philosophy, but an efficient instrumentality, appointed by infinite wisdom, for God's glory; for the sanctification of His people; and for the spread of His gospel throughout the earth.

CHAPTER III.

PRAYER AS RELATED TO PROVIDENCE.

THE previous discussion shows that the doctrine of prayer is in harmony with God's sovereignty and immutability in the Kingdom of Grace. All difficulty in this connection vanishes when we admit that He uses men as instrumentalities in His hands for the accomplishment of His gracious purposes toward them. He may then use prayer as an ordained means for the attainment of His ordained ends.

But does not the doctrine of Prayer as it stands related to that of Providence involve the utmost absurdity, inconsistency and confusion? Take the two instances of rain and disease: Elijah prayed that it might not rain, and it rained not for the space of three years

and six months, and he prayed again and the heavens gave rain; and James says the prayer of faith shall save the sick. Now, if God should put it into the power of His people to control such important questions as the seasons and health, is it not the same virtually as abdicating the throne of Providence, and elevating His people to it in His stead? And then what inextricable confusion would result! Here is a pious farmer whose crops will be injured by rain, separated only by a fence from another whose crops demand it in copious abundance—a battle is to be fought between the armies of two professedly christian people at war; and the pious of both nations meet at the throne of grace with conflicting petitions. Whose prayers will be availing? and on what principles will God's decisions be made accepting or rejecting?

This seems to be a very serious difficulty, but the word of God enables us to remove it. The solution is found in the scriptural state-

ment, that men never truly pray excepting as God indites their petitions. Christians never offer "effectual fervent" prayer excepting as they utter at the throne of grace those things the desire of which He had previously put into their hearts. If this proposition can be proved, the difficulty is removed; for God will not enkindle in the hearts of His people any desire for things in the realm of nature, providence or grace, which it is not His purpose to bring to pass. That men do not present prevailing prayer excepting as God gives the impulse, kindles the desire, and imparts the faith strong enough to encourage approach to the throne, is argued,

1st. From the promise He makes through the Prophet Zechariah, to the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, that He would "pour upon them the Spirit of grace and supplication."[1] The Spirit here is asserted to be the author not only of all grace or

[1] Zech. 12 : 10.

holiness, but of all genuine supplications also. He shows the want, kindles the desire, and indites the petition. Whether then the supplication relates to things in the domain of grace, or nature, or providence, it is indited by the Spirit of supplications; and is effectual because thus indited. There is no danger of conflict between such petitions and God's purpose in grace, nature, or providence; for "He that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints, *according to the will of God*." [1]

2d. Again, the proposition is sustained positively and in direct terms, by Paul in his epistle to the Romans: "Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities; for we know not what we should pray for as we ought; but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be [2] uttered." Here the doctrine is set up that we know not

[1] Rom. 8: 27. [2] Rom. 8: 26.

what we should pray for as we ought; and that the Spirit suggests to us the subject matter of our true petitions. The inference is plain and unmistakable that when we, in our ignorance, without divine suggestion, select the topics to be presented to the throne of grace, our petitions are unavailing and void; and that in all cases of acceptable prayer, the Spirit not only kindles the desire and imparts the faith, but suggests to us "what we should pray for." "There is here an *illustration by example* given of the Spirit's help in *prayer*, namely, not only by exciting us to pray, and strengthening us in prayer, but suggesting to us *what* we should pray for, and *how* our prayers should be expressed. This *influence of suggestion* is in order to set the thing in the strongest point of view, by making, *per* μετάληψιν, the Holy Spirit utter what he only suggests." * "The Holy Spirit intercedes *effectively* in the *heart* as our helper

* Bloomfield in loc.

by impelling us to prayer, and suggesting to us how we ought to pray; by exciting in our hearts aspirations, unutterable by the tongue, to our Heavenly Father; finally, by himself praying, as it were, *in us*—*for us*, so that we by him cry Abba, Father." *

3d. The passage in James, if it be properly translated, sustains as effectively the proposition: "The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much." [1] Now, there are not in the original two words, one meaning "effectual," and the other "fervent," but one Greek word, ἐνεργουμένη, (εν, in, and εργον, work,) which is properly rendered *inwrought*. "The prayer of a righteous man inwrought [by the Holy Spirit] availeth much." Other passages also tend to the same conclusion—as, "praying in the Holy Ghost;" [2] "praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit." [3]

* Bloomfield in loc.

[1] Ja. 5: 16.

[2] Jude 20.

[3] Ep. 6: 18.

4th. An argument corroborative of the proposition is found also in the fact that sincere and earnest petitions may be presented and yet fail to become prevailing prayer. Impelled not by God's Spirit but by personal tribulations and disquietudes, or by a strong desire for some coveted earthly good—sympathizing with others in their dangers or necessities, we may with much emotion, and with great importunity, besiege a throne of grace unavailingly. How often have christians entreated earnestly for the removal of some affliction, or agonized in prayer for the delivery of loved ones from impending death, without obtaining the favor sought! These desires, natural and commendable, are sometimes stimulated and seconded by the Holy Spirit. In such cases, the petitions are presented not only with importunity and emotion, but with a strong confidence also that God would hear. Many a time has the christian come from his closet with a firm conviction

that God would restore to health one whose case had been considered hopeless by his physician. How often too, alas, has he with sinking heart made agonizing supplications of this kind, feeling all the time that his prayer was not obtaining audience with God! The scriptures furnish some striking examples of this kind: Paul, without success, "besought the Lord thrice" that the "thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan," "might depart from" him;[1] Moses, addressing Israel, testified, "And I besought the Lord at that time, saying, O Lord God, . . . I pray thee, let me go over, and see the good land that is beyond Jordan, that goodly mountain, and Lebanon. But the Lord . . . would not hear me; and the Lord said unto me, Let it suffice thee; speak no more unto me of this matter;"[2] and in Gethsemane the Saviour prayed for the third time in substance, "O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup

[1] 2 Cor. 12: 8. [2] Duet. 3: 23–26.

pass from me: nevertheless not as I will but as thou wilt." Nor are petitions of this character sinful if made conditioned on God's will; nor are they altogether in vain. If the specific favor sought for is denied, God will make evident to the consciousness of the petitioner as he did to that of Paul that His grace will be sufficient for him;[1] will elevate him as He did Moses to some Pisgah's [2]top; and will make him partake in some degree of the profound submission and resignation of the Saviour, and say with Him, "O my Father, if this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, thy will be done." But prevailing prayer — that which secures specifically and literally the blessing sought, is that which is indited by the Holy Spirit.

It will be seen that the doctrine of prayer does not conflict with that of providence. It does not virtually dethrone God and enthrone His people instead; nor does it suggest the

[1] 2 Cor. 12: 9. [2] Deut. 3: 27.

idea of inextricable confusion in the administration of providence; for christians never put up prevailing prayer—as in other things, so also in matters pertaining to the administration of Providence—excepting as they are impressed and instigated by the Holy Spirit.

Question. But it may be asked, why all this formality? Events of providence depend upon God's purpose and His almighty power; and no efficiency can be communicated to Him by the intervention of poor finite men. Why then does He ever put the desire for the providential event first into His people's minds, and then virtually delay the execution of His plan until they express that desire to Him in the form of prayer? Because he would elevate them into partnership with Himself in the administration of Providence also. In the Kingdom of Grace, He needs not the coöperation and assistance of His feeble creatures. In all His operations for the salvation of men, He could employ only

heavenly agencies; or without instrumentality, could speak the word, or even entertain the volition only, and sinners could be instantly sanctified. But He chooses to employ human instrumentality rather. It pleases God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.[1] It is His will that faith should come by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.[2] Consequently, no inhabitant of heaven has the prerogative to declare to sinners the glad tidings of salvation. While on earth, the Saviour, like His disciples, preached, saying: "Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."[3] But when, from heaven, in light brighter than the noonday sun, He appeared to Saul near Damascus, He did not explain to him the way of salvation in answer to the question, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" but said to him, "arise and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do."[4]

[1] 1 Cor. 1: 21.
[2] Rom. 10: 17.
[3] Mat. 4: 17.
[4] Ac. 9: 6.

To Ananias was given the great privilege to lead the blind sinner to the cross. The Holy Spirit enables men to understand the gospel; but He never preaches it to them. Hence He instructed Philip to join himself to the eunuch's chariot.[1] When the "angel of God" appeared to Cornelius, though permitted to testify, "Thy prayers and thine alms are come up for a memorial before God," it was not his prerogative to preach the gospel. A sinner saved by grace alone was to have this great privilege. Therefore his instruction, "Send men to Joppa, and call for one Simon, whose surname is Peter; . . . he shall tell thee what thou oughtest to do."[2] In the Kingdom of Grace, God's ministers and people are co-workers[3] and laborers together[4] with Him. If then He elevates His people into partnership with Himself in the Kingdom of Grace, which is

[1] Ac. 8: 29. [2] Ac. 10: 5, 6.
[3] 2 Cor. 6: 1. [4] 1 Cor. 3: 9.

the greater, why should it be thought strange that He should give them a like position in the Kingdom of Providence, which is the less?

It will be seen then that God requires prayer not only that His people may be sanctified, and made active in his service, but also that they may be elevated into partnership with him in the administration of nature, providence, and grace. How greatly then does He honor the work of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, when He thus permits redeemed sinners to manifest, without impertinence or imbecility, an interest in all His administrations on earth!

It will be seen, again, that the [1] precept, which authorizes men to put up prayers according to their own will, does not conflict with that which limits them to the petition that accords with the will of God; for they have no prevailing will excepting as God works it in them.

[1] Vid. pp. 34, 35.

CONCLUSION.

1. MR. MULLER. 2. PROF. TYNDALL.

TWO practical applications of the doctrine will close this discussion.

1. If we have given a proper exposition of Prayer as it stands related to Providence, it would not be surprising if God should, in all ages of the world, and under every dispensation, raise up those who should be distinguished from the great body of believers by the closeness of their intimacy with Him; by the greatness of their faith; and by the boldness of their petitions. Nor would it be fanaticism should we believe and maintain that He may give to one and another of His favored servants, such impulses, impart to them such desires, and endow them with such faith, as to make them attempt without misgivings the

greatest enterprises for His glory, and the good of men—enterprises involving perhaps the expenditure of princely revenues, with no other resources than the answer to prayer.

There is a striking example apparently of this kind, contemporary with ourselves. A man in Bristol, England, with no pecuniary resources, and not engaged in any lucrative business, undertakes to support thousands of orphans; to build for this purpose vast and magnificent asylums; and to carry on besides other extended benevolent operations: all involving the expenditure annually of hundreds of thousands of dollars, which he professes to acquire solely in answer to prayer. According to his published statement, money in a stream steady enough to prevent serious embarrassment to his vast operations, flows to him from the four quarters of the globe. Now, it is not necessary for the present writer to decide whether Mr. Muller is a genuine man or an impostor—whether his life is really

one of trust or a mere pretension and a sham. It is sufficient for our present purpose to say that the doctrine of prayer as exhibited in the scriptures, prevents the modest profession of a "life of trust" from being in itself incredible and preposterous.

But we may venture a step further. If Mr. Muller, in the many years he has been professing to live a "life of trust," has been able to prove that these revenues he has been disbursing were contributed by others, and came to him without solicitation, his case, so far from being abnormal, furnishes not only a strong corroboration of the scriptural theory of prayer, but a striking example illustrating it. No one in his senses, and in good faith, would have attempted, without personal resources, such great things as he has, unless God had kindled the desire, given the impulse, and imparted the faith: and no one, without divine impulsion and coöperation, could have conducted such enterprises for

twenty years without failure, if he was candid; or disgraceful exposure, if he was an impostor.

To the great body of his people, God gives impulse and faith in prayer adequate to meet all the exigencies and duties and relations of life; and requires them to be "not slothful in business, fervent in spirit, serving the [1] Lord." But one and another he may endow with such faith as to make them undertake the most extraordinary enterprises with no resources excepting those obtained in answer to prayer. Such seems to be Mr. Muller.

2. If the doctrine has been properly set up, it will be seen how illogical is Prof. Tyndall's famous prayer test. Doubting the efficacy of prayer, or perhaps with the design to expose its pretensions, he proposes that a large number of prayers should be offered up daily for a specified term, for the recovery of certain inmates of a London hospital, while the remainder of the patients should be

[1] Rom. 12: 11.

treated medicinally alone. According to his proposition, the one company is to rely exclusively upon prayer; the other alone upon medicine. And his question is, which would be most likely to succeed in healing the sick, christians with their faith and prayers, or physicians with their skill and medicines? Now, it will be seen that this proposition is based upon an entire misconception of the doctrine of prayer.

The bible represents that christians pray because the Holy Spirit puts it into their hearts to do so: the test proposes that they should pray because Dr. Tyndall suggests it to them. The bible teaches that effectual prayer for others is impelled by a benevolent and disinterested desire for their good: the test proposes that it should be undertaken in a spirit of antagonism—to join issue with Dr. Tyndall. The bible exhibits a praying man as approaching the throne of grace with humility, and self-abasement: the test pro-

poses that he should step forth as a champion, vaunting his own importance and efficiency. The bible requires one who would pray to come with faith, nothing doubting: the test requires that he should come, in behalf of Dr. Tyndall, to put God to the test, thus virtually justifying him in withholding confidence until God had satisfactorily passed the test. Finally, the bible requires us to pray impelled by a desire for God's glory: by the test we are urged to do so to convince Dr. Tyndall; or, if he is uncandid, to expose and put him to confusion.

True, God could appoint some modern Elijah to meet this champion of skepticism on the terms he proposes, as He did the ancient one to confront the prophets of [1] Baal; but what important end would be gained by it? A test of the kind, accepted and successfully sustained, is not needed to show that God hears the prayer of faith. There is

[1] 1 Ki: 18, 19, etc.

already on record, in God's completed revelation, evidence enough to show that the sick have been healed time and again in answer to prayer; and an additional fact of this kind will not strengthen the proof. With the bible in their hands, the people do not need the successful test to convince them of the doctrine; and Doctor Tyndall, unless God changes his heart, could easily persuade himself, in that case, that the recovery of the sick in connection with prayer was brought about by collusion; or that it was a remarkable coincidence, unaccountable on any known principles. He could explain it away as readily as he disposes of such cases as Mr. Muller; and all too with a conviction that he was acting in perfect candor, and on scientific principles.

Herod had heard many things of Jesus, and had for a long time desired to see Him; and when He was sent to him by Pilate, he was glad, and hoped to have seen some mira-

cle done by Him. "Then he questioned with him in many words, but he answered him nothing."[1] Now, as the genuineness of Christ's miracles in the past, and His power to perform them, were not invalidated because He received in silence Herod's proposition that He should gratify his idle curiosity; so, neither is God's promise that the prayer of faith shall heal the sick proved false and vain, because He does not put it into the hearts of some of His children to accept this illogical prayer test, dictated as it is by a motive worse than idle curiosity. Dr. Tyndall and other professed seekers after truth do not need this test to establish their faith. If he and they are candid, they will find prayer tests on record in the bible[2] more striking and convincing than the one he proposes: if they are not candid, they would not be persuaded though one rose from the dead.

[1] Lu. 23: 7, 9.

[2] Jud. 6: 36–40. 1 Ki. 18: 19–39. 2 Ki. 20: 8, 11.

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